



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

*Eels*  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
[www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov)

| APPLICATION NO.   | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO.      |
|---|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 10/687,646  | 10/20/2003  | Tomoki Ohkawa        | Q77972              | 4425                  |
| 23373   | 7590        | 09/28/2005           | EXAMINER            |                       |
| SUGHRUE MION, PLLC<br>2100 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.<br>SUITE 800<br>WASHINGTON, DC 20037 |             |                      |                     | RAMAKRISHNAIAH, MELUR |
| ART UNIT  |             | PAPER NUMBER         |                     |                       |
|   |             |                      |                     | 2643                  |

DATE MAILED: 09/28/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

|                              |                        |                     |  |
|------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--|
| <b>Office Action Summary</b> | <b>Application No.</b> | <b>Applicant(s)</b> |  |
|                              | 10/687,646             | OHKAWA ET AL.       |  |
|                              | <b>Examiner</b>        | <b>Art Unit</b>     |  |
|                              | Melur Ramakrishnaiah   | 2643                |  |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 June 2005.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**.                    2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) 3-5,8-10,14 and 15 is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1,2,6,7 and 11-13 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:
  1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)                     |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)   | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .  |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>10-20-03/6-24-05, 3-24-05</u> | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
|  | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ .                                  |

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-2, 6-7, 11, 12, 13, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wakahara et al. (JP 06-261316, hereinafter Wakahara) in view of Numakura (JP359230358A).

Regarding claim 1, Wakahara discloses a television conference system comprising: a promoter terminal (reads on 300, Drawings: 1-2, 4) that is used by a promoter who promotes a conference, and a plurality of participant terminals (302-305, Drawings: 1, 4) that are used by participants and connected to the promoter terminal via communication line, wherein a maximum connection line number N of the participant terminals which are connectable to the promoter terminal is previously set (this is implied as the reference illustrates four of the participant terminals 302-305 are connected to 300, see Drawing: 4A ), and a connection line number M of the participant terminals (303-304, Drawing 4A) which are connected to the promoter terminal is set to M<= N (abstract and paragraphs: 0011, 0017-0022).

Regarding claim 6, Wakahara discloses a television conference system in which a promoter terminal (reads on 300, Drawings: 1-2, 4) that is used by a promoter who promotes conference, and participant terminals (302-305, Drawings: 1, 4) that are used by participants in the conference are connected to one another via communication line,

the terminal comprising: a television conference control unit in (300, Drawing: 2) including a terminal function selection unit for selecting the terminal function as either of a promoter terminal of a conference or a participant terminal in accordance with selection, wherein a maximum connection line number of a participant terminals which are connectable to the promoter terminal is previously set to the television conference unit (this is implied as the reference illustrates four of the participant terminals 302-305 are connected to 300, see Drawing: 4A, abstract and paragraphs: 0011, 0017-0022).

Regarding claims 12-13, Wakahara discloses a connection control method for a television conference system in which a promoter terminal that is used by a promoter (reads on 300, Drawings: 1-2, 4) who promotes conference, and participant terminals (302-305, Drawings: 1, 4) that are used by participants in the conference are connected to one another via a communication line (Drawing 1), the method comprising: setting a maximum connection line number N of the participant terminals which are to be connected to the promoter terminal (this is implied as the reference illustrates four of the participant terminals 302-305 are connected to 300, see Drawing: 4A ), and connecting the participant terminals to the promoter terminal while setting a connection line number M of the connected participant terminals (303-304, Drawing 4A) to  $M \leq N$  (abstract and paragraphs: 0011, 0017-0022).

Wakahara differs from claims 1, 6, and 12-13 in that he does not explicitly teach the following: the maximum connection line number N is less than a total number of potential connection lines between the promoter terminal and the participant terminals.

However, Numakara discloses conference connection system which teaches the following: the maximum connection line number N is less than a total number of potential connection lines between the promoter terminal and the participant terminals (fig. 2, see abstract).

Thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time invention was made to modify Wakahara's system to provide for the following: the maximum connection line number N is less than a total number of potential connection lines between the promoter terminal and the participant terminals as this arrangement would facilitate to accommodate greater number of conference participants without the change and modification of conference infrastructure as taught by Numakara, thus making it economical to implement conferencing among many users.

Regarding claims 2, 7, and 11, Wakahara further teaches the following: participant terminals include speaker terminals (303-304, Drawing 4) which are enabled to perform two-way communication with the promoter terminal (reads on reads on 300, Drawings: 1-2, 4), and audience terminals (302, 305, Drawing 4) which are enabled to perform one way communication with the promoter terminal, and the connection line number M of participant terminals which are connected to the promoter terminal is set to  $M=2S+T$  where S is a number of connected speaker terminals and T is the number of connected audience terminals, in accordance with selection, each of the participant terminals (for example 303-304, Drawing 4) functions as a speaker terminal which is enabled to perform two-way communication with the promoter terminal, or as an audience terminal (for example 302, 305, Drawing 4) which is enabled to perform one

way communication with the promoter terminal, each of the terminals functioning as an audience terminal comprise a section for sending a request for transferring to the speaker terminal to the promoter terminal, an a section for, on the basis of a request permission of the promoter terminal, transferring to a speaker terminal ( paragraphs: 0017-0022).

3. Claims 3-5, 8-10, 14-15 are allowed.

***Response to Arguments***

4. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-2, 6-7, 11-13 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.
5. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Art Unit: 2643

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Melur Ramakrishnaiah whose telephone number is (703) 305-1461. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 6:30-4:00; every other F Off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Curtis Kuntz can be reached on (703)305-4708. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Melur Ramakrishnaiah  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 2643